ECE Highlights

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE No. 9 March 1991

CLOSING THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY GAP WITH EASTERN EUROPE: A NEW UN/ECE PROJECT

Modernization of existing apartment block in Knowsley Heights, Liverpool, England. Apartment block before modernization (left) and after modernization with new energy-efficient exterior insulation (right)

The project Energy Efficiency 2000 was agreed upon by Governments at the ECE regional follow-up Conference of the World Commission on Environment and Development held in Bergen, Norway, during May 1990. It has now been adopted for implementation by UN/ECE. The project is designed to improve the energy efficiency of Eastern European countries which are only half as efficient as Western market economies.

It is estimated that reducing the efficiency gap of Eastern Europe by half would save 540 million tonnes of oil equivalent (mtoe) in the year 2000 and 600 mtoe in 2010, of which 90 per cent would be fossil fuels. Harmful emissions of SO_2 and CO_2 would also be reduced by 20 to 25 per cent. It is predicted that this would translate as a 10 per cent reduction in the emission of global greenhouse gases.

The project's objectives

The initiative will help expand today's small exchanges in the East-West energy efficiency service industry. Contacts between Western and Eastern businessmen, trade officials, bankers, engineers and energy managers will be increased and a range of information services offered. These contacts and services will explain policies, incentives, financing opportunities and contract and accounting procedures for East-West trade and co-operation. Energy Efficiency 2000 will also provide a forum for the dissemination of energy-efficient technologies and energy demand management techniques.

Range of activities

A number of colloquia, round tables, lectures, briefings and workshops in each energy-using sector, such as building, transport and industry, will be convened. It is planned to hold up to 40 events a year from 1991 to 1993. Four symposia are planned to be held on key aspects of energy efficiency with participation of Eastern European experts.

The initiative also calls for the establishment of a computerized, on-line database comprising:

Addresses of individuals in relevant enterprises, banks, and government offices;

Guide to financial instruments;

Descriptions of technologies, products and services;

Abstracts of current research on energy-efficient technology;

Special studies on energy efficiency and environmental pollution.

The three-year project will be supported by trust funds from participating countries.

UN Economic Commission for Europe adapts its structure to new priorities

Resumed 45th session of the Commission reaffirms need to support countries in transition

UN/ECE, in view of its composition - all of Europe and North America - and the nature of the co-operation which it promotes, responded at its 45th session in April 1990 to the profoundly changed conditions in the region and pronounced assistance to the countries in transition and facilitation of the integration of their economies into the world economy as general priorities of its work. In recognition of the great importance of environmental concerns, the concept of sustainable development as a guiding principle for the subsidiary organs of the Commission was also reaffirmed.

The resumed 45th Commission session, held in December 1990, adopted decisions elaborated by a Special Working Group which was set up to adapt the priorities and structure of ECE to the new situation in the region and the special interests of its member countries. Environment, transport, trade facilitation, statistics and economic analysis were defined as priority areas of the Commission's work. It was agreed to take practical measures in the priority areas of activity, including the strengthening of resources, within the current ECE budget, and improvement of administrative activities and methods of work. All Principal Subsidiary Bodies (PSBs) were requested to review their programme of work, structure and working methods. The Commission's organizational structure will be restricted to two levels below that of the Commission, namely PSBs and Working Parties. Workshops, symposia and other informal forums will be organized on subjects of interest to economies in transition. In another decision it was agreed that the Commission would, in future, convene *ad hoc* informal meetings at least once every three months between its annual sessions to ensure an ongoing dialogue among member countries and between them and the secretariat.

Transboundary Air Pollution: entry into force of Nitrogen Oxides Protocol

The Protocol concerning the control of emission of nitrogen oxides or their transboundary fluxes, signed by environment ministers and high-level officials at a conference in Sofia (Bulgaria), on 1 November 1988, became internationally binding on 14 February 1991. The Protocol commits its signatories to a package of agreed pollution abatement measures, starting with a "freeze" of nitrogen oxide emissions from 1994. In order to become legally effective, the Protocol requires a minimum of 16 ratifications by signatory Governments. Germany deposited the sixteenth ratification instrument. It is the first environmental treaty that will apply to the entire territory of the country following its reunification.

European forestry to play a major role for the environment

Gerald Hinteregger

In his address to the Ministerial Conference for the Protection of Forests in Europe held at Strasbourg, France, in December, Mr. Gerald Hinteregger said that forestry in Europe, together with other regions, might well be called upon to play an important role in tackling the problem of global warming. Although the intensive debate over the phenomenon of climate change caused by deforestation is mainly associated with the tropical and sub-tropical regions, attention must also be paid to agricultural production in many parts of Europe and the impact of possible changes in agricultural support policies on the pattern of rural land use. The Executive Secretary observed that millions of hectares of agricultural land in Europe might no longer be needed for farming in the future. The question was whether the extensive afforestation of abandoned agricultural land could help to slow down the CO_2 build-up in the atmosphere by trapping and storing carbon as biomass.

Noting the relevance of forestry issues for the countries of central and Eastern Europe, Mr. Hinteregger said that the great satisfaction at the easing of tensions in Europe should be tempered by a growing recognition of the enormity of the task of transforming and restructuring the economies of those countries. The UN/ECE, with its long experience in dealing with pan-European economic questions, had decided to make assistance to the countries in transition a general priority of its work. Environmental protection had also been designated as one of the priority areas of activity of the ECE, and it was evident that reducing air and water pollution levels would be a major preoccupation of the countries in transition.

Electric power situation in Romania—need for adjustment and co-operation

At a briefing on the Romanian electric power situation organized under the auspices of the UN/ECE at Iassi, Romania, Romanian energy specialists presented a detailed picture of the current situation of the national electric energy sector. Participants at the meeting suggested that the Romanian energy authorities pay greater attention to demand side management, enhance commercial co-operation, develop interconnections of electric power networks, invest more in environmental protection and adapt institutional structures to market economy elements. Delegations also identified promising fields of non-financial multilateral co-operation such as training of managers and staff and energy efficiency policies.

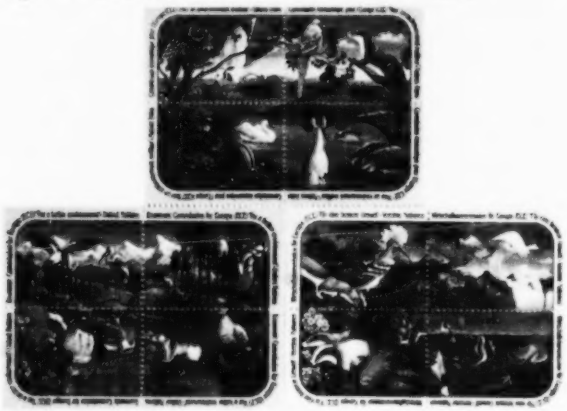
European Red List completed in Antalya (Turkey)

The preservation of biological diversity in the interest of present and future generations is the objective of the

European Red List of Globally Threatened Animals and Plants, which was completed by the Senior Advisers to ECE Governments on Environmental and Water Problems at an *ad hoc* meeting at Antalya (Turkey) in December 1990. The list contains more than 4,000 plant and about 300 animal species threatened at global level. It provides information on species distribution in individual European member countries of the ECE region and species conservation status according to the World Conservation Union (IUCN) categories of threat.

ECE - For a better Environment - 1991 New issue of United Nations stamps

On 15 March 1991, the United Nations Postal Administration will issue a new set of three stamps on the theme "ECE—for a Better Environment". The denominations of the stamps are SwF 0.90, $US 0.30, AS 5.00. This beautiful set of stamps, which seeks to represent the marvellous variety of the environment that is our heritage, is a tribute to the role of ECE in this field.



NEW PUBLICATIONS

Recent economic developments in the region

The latest edition of the UN/ECE Economic Bulletin for Europe which reviews the current economic situation in Europe and North America received extensive press and radio coverage. Prominent articles appeared in the Financial Times, the International Herald Tribune, the Washington Post, the Tribune de Genève, Frankfurter Allgemeine, Le Monde, Die Presse, Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Der Standard, La Suisse and Berlingske Tidende. Many of these reports focused on the harsh winter which the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe are likely to face, the worst since the Second World War, as the recession compounded by multiple oil price shocks and the collapse of intra-CMEA trade deepens further.

Economic Bulletin for Europe—Volume 42. Sales No. E.90.II.E.37. Price: $US 55.00

Code of conduct on accidental pollution of transboundary inland waters

UN/ECE has published a Code of Conduct on Accidental Pollution of Transboundary Inland Waters. The adoption of the Code of Conduct represents the first collective response by ECE member Governments to the need to reinforce international co-operation in preventing and combating accidental pollution. The Code of Conduct provides guidance for the competent authorities in individual member countries in their task of protecting transboundary inland waters against pollution resulting from hazardous activities in the case of man-made accidents or natural disasters.

Code of Conduct on Accidental Pollution of Transboundary Inland Waters (E/ECE/1225-ECE/ENVWA/16). Sales No. E.90.II.E.28. Price: $US 10.00.

OTHER SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

GENERAL

Economic Commission for Europe Annual Report (E/1990/41-E/ECE/1224, 22 April 1989-27 April 1990)

Economic Reforms and their Significance for all-European Co-operation—Transcript of a Round-Table, organized on 28 May 1990 in Geneva.

ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

The State of Transboundary Air Pollution - 1989 update—Air Pollution Studies No. 6, Sales No. E.90.II.E.33. Price: $US 25.00

Rent Policy in ECE countries (ECE/HBP/78). Sales No. E.90.II.E.29. Price: $US 23.00

Directory of Bodies concerned with Urban and Regional Research (ECE/HBP/50). Sales No. E.90.II.E.32. Price: $US 60.00

INDUSTRY

The Steel Market in 1989 (ECE/STEEL/70). Sales No. E.90.II.E.34. Price: $US 30.00

STATISTICS

The Statistical Journal of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe—Vol. 7, Number 1 (1990)

TRADE

International Buy-Back Contracts (ECE/TRADE/176). Sales No. E.90.II.E.35. Price: $US 25.00

East-West Joint Venture News—No. 6, October 1990

TIMBER

Forest Products Markets in 1989-1990—Issue No. 5 of volume XLIII of the Timber Bulletin, July 1990.

TRANSPORT

Transport Information 1990 (TRANS/INFO/90/1). Sales No. E.90.II.E.30. Price: $US 23.00

Convention on civil liability for damage caused during carriage of dangerous goods by road, rail and inland navigation vessels (CRTD) - ECE/TRANS/84 - Sales No. E.90.II.E.39 - Explanatory Report. Price: $US 35.00

WHERE TO ORDER

The publications listed with sales prices may be ordered from: **United Nations Bookshop, Sales Unit, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland** and a number of bookstores in the ECE region. Send cheque or money order in US dollars made payable to: UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATIONS.

Those publications listed without a sales price may be obtained from the Information Officer, Economic Commission for Europe, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

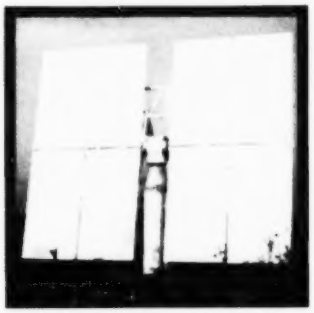
READEX FICHE

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

UN/ECE Seminar on Solar Power Systems will consider competitiveness of solar electricity

22-26 April 1991

Solar energy is considered to be one of the promising renewable and clean energy sources for the future. A seminar on Solar Power Systems to be held at Alushta, near Yalta, USSR, is intended to further international co-operation in the development and utilization of solar power systems and to promote a sustainable energy development in the ECE region and world-wide. Discussions will cover the economics of solar electricity for small and large scale applications and a review of development targets and possibilities for international co-operation. The seminar is organized under the auspices of UN/ECE in co-operation with the World Energy Council (WEC) and hosted by the USSR State Committee for Science and Technology (GKNT) and the Krzhizhanovsky Power Engineering Institute (ENIN).



Solar power plant heliostat

Seminar on Comprehensive Policies for Renewal and Modernization of Human Settlements

Leningrad (USSR), 13-18 May 1991

Today, in the ECE region, urban renewal and modernization work represents a very significant share of total construction activities. In some countries, investment in this field equals or surpasses that made in new construction work. This Seminar will identify the strategic orientations of renewal and modernization policies which integrate social, economic, environmental and cultural aspects. It is expected to provide a substantial contribution to those ECE activities that aim to further sustainable development. The conclusions and recommendations of the Seminar will take the form of a comprehensive policy statement on the renewal and modernization of human settlements.

Ecosystems Approach to Water Management

27-31 May 1991

The ecosystems approach, as a concept for managing water resources, provides a holistic way of viewing planning, research and management of water resources. The UN/ECE Seminar on Ecosystems Approach to Water Management to be convened at Oslo (Norway), is designed to provide a forum for ECE Governments to exchange information and to compare their experience with the development and application of this approach to water management. Recommendations to ECE Governments and proposals for specific action-oriented follow-up activities on the subject will be drawn up for consideration by the Senior Advisers on Environmental and Water Problems at their session in 1992.

ECE CALENDAR

SELECTED EVENTS

1991

March

4-7	Committee on Agricultural Problems
6-8	Meeting of Experts on the Development of a European Railway Network
12-15	Working Party on Facilitation of International Trade Procedures
18-21	Meeting on Statistics of Services
25-28	Working Party on Water Problems (special session)

April

9-19	Forty-sixth session of the Economic Commission for Europe
24-26	Meeting of Experts on Human Settlements Problems in Southern Europe (Turkey)

May

5-11	Study Tour on Forest Resources and Timber Industries (Portugal)
6-8	Meeting on the Trans-European North-South Railway Project (TER)
13-17	Senior Economic advisers to ECE Governments
13-17	Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods
20-24	Seminar on Technologies and Applications in the Wood-based Panels Sector (Gdansk, Poland)
20-24	Workshop on the Market Adaptation of Coal Industry Structures and Management in Central and Eastern Europe (Hungary)
21	Workshop on the Management of Joint Ventures and Industrial Co-operation Projects (Austria)

For further information, contact:
The Information Officer,
Economic Commission for Europe,
Palais des Nations,
1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Telephone: (022) 734 60 11
Ext. 2893 or 2666
Telex: 28 96 96
Telefax: (22) 349 825

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